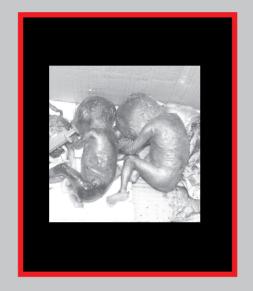
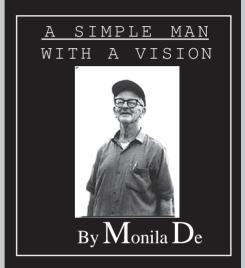
The voice of Kalimpong

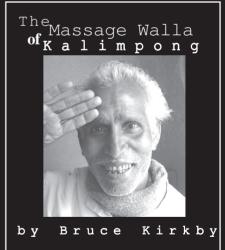
Himalayan Times



Death
before
Birth

IN A GARBAGE DUMP

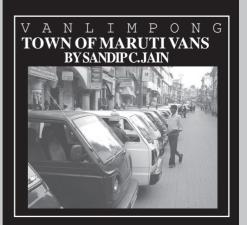






THEIRW ORDS
OUR VOCABULA RY

Dr. S.B.Wangyel



EDITORIAL

Anyone who known anything about Indian history will have heard about Kalidas. Yes he was the guy who chopped off that very branch on which he was sitting. Well history always has parallels in present the and Kalidas too has in the present times someone who matches his suicidal stupidity. Infact his present day counterpart is not just a single person but an entire town of more that fifty thousand people. We in Kalimpong can give Kalidas a run for his money as far as stupidity is concerned.

Kalidas felled the branch on which he was perched upon but we in Kalimpong are several steps ahead- we are annihilating the entire land that we are so fortunate to be living upon. We seem to be hell bent cutting off that very branch we are so delicately placed on. Our environment is taking such a beating that it is sure that one day, sooner than later, it is going to make us pay for all the ill treatment we are presently heaping upon it.

We are still using plastic despite several half baked efforts by either the authorities or by some NGO with some fancy name, we are still building our buildings higher than what they should be, our jhoras are still being clogged and our trees are still being felled to the extent that our once green hillsides now resemble the desert combat uniforms that the US Army wears.

How much longer will Mother Nature be able to tolerate our exploitation and how much longer She will forgive us for this is something only time will tell. My guess is that very soon Mother Nature will come back with a vengeance which none of us will be able to live through. My guess is that it will be pay back time when Mother Nature decides to make her annoyance felt with either a massive Land Slide or a Earth Quake and we cannot do a thing about it for we have left no room for a compromise with her.

Till then we can continue building our houses taller (with timber delivered at the dead of the night), we can continue clogging our jhoras with the soil suffocating plastic bags and we can keep choking our drains with the construction materials dumped on the roadsides.

But when one day Mother Nature comes calling to settle her account with us, neither Chief Minister Bhattacharya or CEO Ghishing will sit for a tripartite meeting with Her to settle the issue- it will be us and Her!!! After all we are the ones who have raped her....

Kalidas learnt this lesson to become one wise guy whom history still remembers – Why can't we in Kalimpong?

YOURPAGEYOURPAGEYOURPAGEYOUR

Dear Editor, PAGE YOUR PAGE YOUR PAGEYOUR PAGE

Every year a band of Khalasis went about their job of cleaning the roadside drains of Kalimpong very efficiently. Now they have been replaced by young, inexperienced daily labourers.

On 17.2.06 such a band of young careless and irresponsible daily labourers were sent to clean the drains of Lower Bridle Road. They collected the dry leaves along the drain and burnt them without even watching where the fire was likely to spread.

the fire was likely to spread.

The fire started in the drain below my house "Monjula", it soon crept up the hillside into my garden destroying several trees and other flowering plants.

When I saw the fire and set the alarm one young labourer came up to beat the fire down while we poured, the most precious commodity of all, water, to the flames. When I asked the group of labourers who had sent them, they ran away in fits of laughter.

The fire set by these men had not died down completely and so at 8.00 PM the same day, the fire fanned by a strong wind blazed anew. I rang the Kalimpong Fire Brigade at once but nobody picked up the phone. I tried the second number which was engaged continuously. Either it was out of order or off the hook.

In desperation I rang my neighbour Mr. C.K.Kumai, the Chairman of the Kalimpong Municipality. He too tried to ring the Fire Brigade but met with the same results so he sent a man on a scooter to inform the Fire Department officials. Mr. Kumai also informed the Police and was on the scene within ten minutes.

The Fire engine eventually arrived after 21 minutes but to bring the water hose up the hillside to the fire, it took them another twenty minutes. The Fire men were far from efficient at their job. I wonder if they get any training at all to fight fires.

With our guidance the flames were doused at last. I shudder to think what would have happened if it was the house that was on fire instead of the trees and plants. The fire would have spread to the huts below and Chitrabhanu which is just next door. Mr. Kumai and all my neighbours were more active and helpful in putting out the fire than the Fire fighters, and I am extremely grateful to them.

grateful to them.

This incident makes me wonder how much we the people of Kalimpong can depend on our services.

Monila De GE YOUR PAGE YOUR PAGE YOUR
Monjula OUR PAGE YOUR PAGEYOUR PAGE
Kalimpong

OUR PAGE YOUR PAGE YOUR PAGE YOUR

DO YOU HAVE ANY THING THAT YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH THE

REST OF

KALIMPONG???

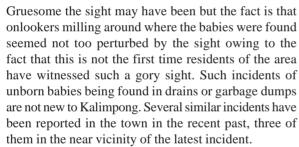
HAVE YOUR SAY AT PAG

DEATH BEFORE BIRTH

n Sandip C. Jain

Por sheer brazenness and inhumanness nothing or no one can match the protagonists of this tale of crime. Nothing can be more inhuman and no one can be more ruthless than to dump a baby inside a garbage dump even before it had the chance to see the light of day.

In a chilling incident which has left the town searching for clues, two six month old unborn male babies were found thrown inside a garbage dump above Mela Ground.



While the Police is still clueless about those behind the horrific crime, locals point an accusing finger towards a person who has long been suspected to perform illegal abortions in the town though no one is willing to go on



record. Says a resident of the area, "Our area has become a dumping ground for the sins of other people. How can someone be so cruel as to throw away a child which has grown within her for more than six months?? The culprit must be brought to books."

It is worth mentioning here that in an earlier similar occurrence when a unborn child was found from a drain in Motor Stand, the suspect was apprehended by the Police but despite a huge public outcry the suspect was left off much too lightly.

While the common man on the streets may not ever be able to yield to his or her feeling of anger, shock and outrage over such horrific incidents, the authorities seems not too very disturbed over the entire matter. "We have sent the bodies for post mortem and are looking into the incident," is all the law enforcers could offer.

While shaming the perpetrators of this crime is essential so that others think twice about committing such crimes in future, it remains to be seen if at the culprit will actually be hunted down and identified.

Till then Kalimpong can keep finding babies in its drains and garbage dumps. ■

Extreme Solutions

Inspired by Technology

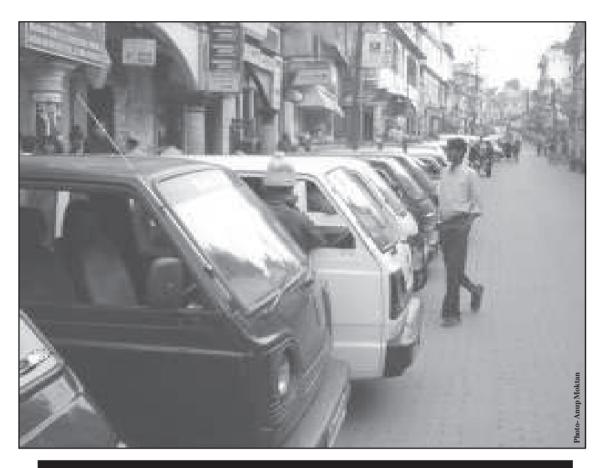
101/2 Mile, Sahid D.B.Giri Road, Near Dr. Mullick's Nursing Home Kalimpong

Management Executives:
Manoj Prasad & Anil Chowdhury
Phone 98323-33934, 98323-60836, 9832435119
E-mail- eskpg@consultant.com

Avail faster & reliable computer service at Extreme Solutions



* Computer Sales & Services * Networking * Graphic Designing * Computer Peripherals * AMCS & total IT Solutions



V A N L I M P O N G TOWN OF THE MARUTI VANS

by Sandip C Jain

uring a recent brain storming session between likeminded friends in Kalimpong, which was directed towards arriving at a consensus over providing a catchy slogan to be attached to the name of the town, several interesting suggestion came out. Needless to say but at the end of the two hour session, we were still where we had begun i.e. Kalimpong still did not have any slogans to be attached to its name which was commonly accepted by all. But a session like this in Kalimpong ending without any conclusions is in no way surprising, after all the saying "Paray ko Salla Kharani ko dalla" holds a lot of in our lovable little town, doesn't it???? But like I said, the session left us enriched with several very very interesting and some downright hilarious suggestions. One such suggestion, which came from a very respectable doctor of the town, was "Land of the Lollipops". Coming from a doctor was interesting enough but even more interesting was the response that it evoked. The response from the majority of the people present was that if Lollipops were associated with Kalimpong, all tourists with a diabetic problem, the world now being full of it, would shun Kalimpong like plagun.

Another suggestion was "Land of the Neora Forest", this too was not accepted as it was felt that now Lava, having become a tourist destination by itself, had full monopoly over the Neora forest plus Neora Forest is now no longer an official part of Kalimpong after it was transferred to the Jalpaiguri forest range. A fellow journalist threw out the most interesting suggestion that I thought was in a way actually what Kalimpong symbolizes at the present times. This journalist who behind his bored looks and thick specks holds a ultra quick wit and wacky sense of humor, suggested the name "Town of the Maruti Vans" more appropriately Vanlimpong. Though of course this suggestion was made off the record and was made more as a mood-lifter, I felt this could have been the ideal name for the town, which in the present days seems to be chocking on Maruti vans. This I

am sure many would agree fully exemplifies the situation that Kalimpong is at the moment. At a conservative estimate about 800 Maruti vans are decorating the roads of the town. For a small hilly town like ours that has at place, roads narrower than Bitney Spears waists, this is far too many a number that can be accepted without any fuss. With about 5 new cars entering the town every month, the situation turning worse with every day that rolls by. The situation has attained such serious proportions that now even a stroll down can be a life threatening act. My guess is that Kalimpong has more Maruti Cars in relation to the total number of cars than

probably any other town of its size in the entire nation. One visitor to the town, a senior IAS Office posted with the Indian Postal Services, after getting over the initial shock of seeing the flood of Maruti vans,



At a conservative estimate about 800 Maruti vans are decorating the roads of the town.

joked that if the Managing Director of Maruti Udyog Limited was to ever set his eyes on all these Maruti vans, he would either resign his position as the head of this company due to the shame of seeing the havoc that his creation has caused in this beautiful town or he would be so delighted that he would order his Sales Department to give a 33.33% discount on all cars sold to Kalimpong residents. Maybe, he would even use footage of the Maruti Vans swarming at Kalimpong, in one of the many commercials that his company runs on Some may say that the numbers of vehicles on the roads of any particular place is a good vardstick to gauze the development of the place. While this might hold some water, shouldn't the quality of the roads to be taken into account if anv such is assessment to made?????Must not the road

available for the proper running of these vehicles be better prepared and maintained for the town to be actually labeled as a developed one. With every Tom, Dick and Harry now buying a car to further develop(??) the town, is it not expected that all the revenue raised from the vehicles owners by way of taxes, should have gone towards maintenance of the presently pot hole littered road on which these very vehicles runs on? A news item appeared in several local publications including the Himalayans Times, which reported a demand by the Darjeeling Hill Transport Joint Action Committee, now a part of the Gorkha National Drivers Front. The demand was that the Motor vehicle Department currently under the State Government be transferred to the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council for the better management of the funds that is generated by the department from the Hill District. Looking at the lack of funds at the disposal of the local bodies for the purpose of road maintenance, this demand I feel is fully

But wouldn't better roads again mean more Maruti vans??? ■

HOTEL TASHIDELEK

*Lodging * Restaurant * Shopping complex

Tashi Delek Complex SDB Giri Road, Opposite David Gas Agency Kalimpong

Your comfort our endevour

A S I M P L E MAN

WITH A VISION

By Monila De



The Gandhi Ashram school children would shuffle up to me in groups or singly with serious faces and furrowed brows and anxiously ask me, "Boju, what will happen to us when Father is no more? I would smile and say "Don't worry your little heads about that, Father is very fit and strong, he will live for a long time like most foreigners." They would run along happily, their fears allayed and immerse themselves in childish play with not a care in the world.

I was convinced that Father Meguire would live to a ripe old age superceding us all. Therefore, it came as a great shock to me when I was informed in London that he was no more. I couldn't believe it, I still can't. I keep seeing his happy smiling face.

Father was never ill for a day. The only time he was forced into bed was after a bad fall from his rattletrap scooter and once down the steep stairs in front of his room. He never showed any signs of fatigue. He went up and down several steep flights of stairs, umpteen times a day in the school.

Father was well known for his super human energy and swiftness in Darjeeling, where he went as a young man and spent most of his youth. He went careering up and down the mountain slopes effortlessly. People marvelled at his speed and stamina. In Germany, while the children paddled around in paddle boats on a huge lake, Father at the age of 75, took a row boat and rowed for hours on the lake. His agility amazed me. At the age of 76 when he tripped over a dog behind him, he didn't fall flat on his back as

anyone else would have done. His back barely touched the hard cement floor. In one smooth, swift manoeuvre his legs went over his head in a neat summersault and he regained his feet like an expert acrobat!

When he fell down the stairs in front of his room, I insisted that he should put a railing on it. "I won't be occupying this room much longer, my room is ready in the new building. I will be shifting there soon, "he said. He never occupied the new room, it was too posh for him. He did put up a railing on the stairs though.

Just as the brand new room was too grand for him, the school van and driver was a luxury. He only used it for his trip to Darjeeling once a month. The rest of the time the van was used by other members of the school, while he used his battered old scooter. I begged him to use the van but to no avail.

The only sign of tiredness I ever noticed in him was while chatting with me, sometimes he would yawn incessantly. Perhaps it was due to lack of sleep or sheer boredom of listening to me.

Father ate the very simple vegetarian, non greasy, saltless food with the children. Salt is never used for cooking in Gandhi Ashram School. A larger bottle of salt is kept on the table for anyone who wants to add salt to their food. Father abhorred the

smell and taste of milk, so tea was made devoid of milk in the school. This was a great saving since he had to cut corners to feed the multitude. Although he disliked milk, he loved cheese and icecream. The only luxury he allowed himself was to have a cup of icecream quietly, whenever he visited Kalimpong town.

His austere life style is exactly what the doctors prescribe, yet he died of a massive heart attack. He just dropped down dead. He wouldn't have wanted it any other.

Father was always over anxious to feed the children, even during their trip abroad where they were well stuffed with plenty of fruits, chocolates and soft drinks all day long apart from sumptuous meals. During the long coach ride from Germany to Switzerland, lunch time arrived. There were enough snacks in the coach to sustain the children till the end of their journey but Father insisted that lunch was imperative for them. He asked the coach driver to stop at a wayside motel for lunch. He ordered the most substantial food available, a large plate of spaghetti Bolonaise for each child. Since we were on our own, between hosts, Father paid for this expensive lunch from the meager foreign exchange he had for emergencies. To him this was an emergency.

He loved the children of his school and made it very clear to the teachers not to punish or be harsh to them. The children loved and respected him, just one word of disapproval from him and they would immediately mend their ways. He could be

very strict too. If a child repeatedly missed school, violin practice or stayed at home instead of the boarding, he would throw him or her out of Gandhi Ashram.

His motto was "Given a chance, a child can achieve anything in life." This he proved by getting the poor children of the villages who had never heard or seen a violin to master it. The Gandhi Ashram Orchestra., playing western classical music, is a phenomenon



The writer with Father Mcguire and a friend in Germany

that people from all over the world came to listen to well appreciated by the western world, the children were invited to Germany and Switzerland to give concerts and appear in a television programme which was aired all over Europe during prime time. The children are doing very well in their studies too. Father gave them a chance to prove themselves, a chance they would never have had if he hadn't started his school with such zeal and vision.

Apart from children, cheese and icecreem, Father loved flowers. "I am an idiot when it comes to flowers," He

would say. He enjoyed and admired tulips and other flowers in bloom while abroad. He made time to visit a nursery in every town to buy seeds for Gandhi Ashram. With much love and care, he grew beautiful geraniums in his school.

He loved nature. The sharp cold climate, the tender green leaves and perfume of apple blossoms of spring in Germany excited exhilirated, and rejuvinated him. Thev transported him back to his home in Canada, which he had left 50 years ago. He wanted the children to enjoy and appreciate everything he was experiencing after such a long time. He would point out the lone robin to them, make them taste the acid dandelion leaves, to inhale lung full of cold air and breathe out streams of water vapour. He was very eager to show the children from the might Himalayas the sea.

I had never seen him so happy and relaxed. He was a young man again. Watching him in this euphoric state of mind, I finally asked him "Father, why did you leave all these things you love so much to come to India?" he replied, "Religion."

Father was a deeply religious man who hardly ever wore a sutan or preached. He was in mortal fear of losing his beloved school if the word went around that he was preaching his religion there to convert the children. He kept his religion strictly to himself. Instead he wanted the children to follow Mahatma Gandhi's principles and way of life. He therefore, named his school 'Gandhi Ashram'.



Father with his young wards in Gandhi Ashram School

Father was a very humble unassuming and simple man. I never saw him wearing anything but a half-sleeved checked shirt and blue baggy trousers. His only pair of black shoes were dusty and worn out. I often asked him why he never wore his sutan. He would look embarrassed and sheepishly say, "It needs to be taken to the jhora for a good wash before I can wear it." I suspected that being a cumbersome garment it restricted his velocity so he left it alone, for very special occasions only.

Father landed in Germany without a jacket or a pullover. He was soon freezing. "Why didn't you bring your jacket," I asked him. "I was going to buy one in Kolkata but the shops were closed that day," he replied. He had no intention of buting one I am sure. He never spent a penny on himself except for an odd cup of icecreem.

The next day a kind German couple took me to a warehouse full of second hand clothes. The first garment I selected was a hefty warm jacket for Father, then tons of clothes for the children.

Then came the big day when he had to appear on stage with the children for the T.V. show. I asked him if he had a formal shirt for the occasion. "Yes, I did bring a shirt. It was in a polythene bag which I unfortunately left behind in the plane." I know at once that this was a white lie. The organizers fitted him out. He was taken to the make-up room before his T.V. appearance. This he resisted violently and volubily. "Fancy me wearing powder, rouge and lipstick!" he fumed. All

that the make up artists could manage to apply on him was a thin film of powder.

Father was a perfect gentleman always. Every time I went down to Gandhi Ashram School, I had to thumb a lift back from the main road. Father would not only insist on reaching me up to the road but quietly pay my fare to the driver as well. He was gracious to everyone who came to visit Gandhi Ashram School.

In Switzerland we were housed in an bomb shelter. There were three large rooms with rows of double decker beds. The girls promptly occupied one room, the boys and the teacher another. That left a German lady, accompanying us, me and Father to occupy the third room. Father was mortified at the very idea of sharing a room with two ladies even though they were long in the tooth.

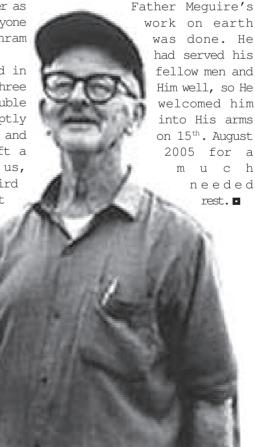
My friend and I took the two beds in one corner of the big room. Father chose the farthest and the darkest corner diagonally opposite. We never saw him lying on his bed. He took good care to slip

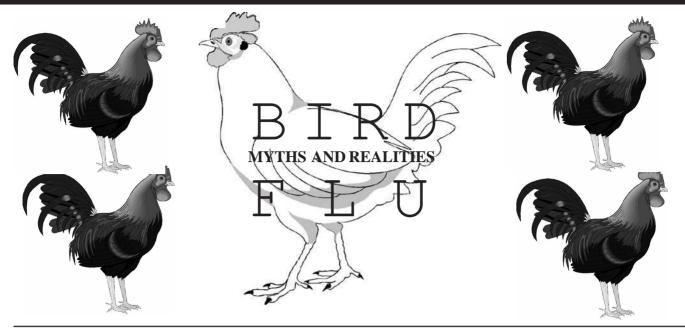
into his long after we were fast asleep and out of it before we work up. He was much relieved when we shifted to another place.

Father's dream was to construct a modern bright and airy dormitory for the girls and boys staying at Gandhi Ashram. He did manage to complete the four storied building with spacious class room and girl's dormitory with rows of toilets and shower stalls. The best dormitory in Kalimpong but the boy's one didn't materalise.

In twelve years Father Meguire had established a big school with a boarding, an orchestra of renoun for the poor. Children of the villages, opening the doors of education for them.

Father's boundless energy, enthusiasm and vision were legendary. He had achieved the impossible. God decided that





ne scare of bird flu in some Asian countries like Vietnam, Republic of Korea and Japan has resulted in a decrease in consumption of poultry domestically due to some unfounded myths. This has led to crashing of prices of poultry and poultry products in some major consumption centres putting Indian farmers engaged in poultry and other allied activities to great economic loss. The major myths surrounding the bird flu scare are as follows:

Myth 1: Chicken and eggs in our country may not be safe due to bird flu in some other countries.

Reality: Bird flu (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza-HPAI) is caused by a highly pathogenic (H5N1) strain of virus in poultry and India is free from this virus. In fact, all the SAARC countries are free from this. Therefore, poultry and poultry products are safe for consumption in the whole region.

Myth 2: As there are advisories on cooking chicken and eggs well, there may be a possibility of transmission of the virus through under-cooked poultry products.

Reality: Even in the countries where there have been cases of bird flu infection in humans, it has been found that it may only be transmitted through contact with live, bird-flu infected birds and not through consumption of poultry and poultry products. It is generally advised to cook well egg, poultry, meat and meat products, etc. just as any other food including vegetables because this rids the products of any undesirable pathogens which might be there and not specifically with respect to bird flu. Most pathogens get destroyed on heating at 70 degrees centigrade for 10 minutes and the food is safe for consumption from all angles. This is similar to preference for boiled milk as compared to raw milk.

Myth 3: Bird flu may ingress into our country without our knowledge.

Reality: The Government and the industry are taking the strongest biosecurity measures available and the SAARC member States have agreed to strengthen the mechanisms for surveillance, recording, reporting, diagnosis and management of the disease by exchange and pooling of expertise and resources. Indiaôu state-of-the-art High Security laboratory at Bhopal is constantly monitoring the situation along with veterinarians in all the States. Therefore, it is unlikely that any disease might infiltrate into our country without our knowledge.



THEIRWORDS OURVOCABULA RY

With this essay titled

"Their World - Our Vocabulary"

the regular "Recalling Kalimpong" will go off the print
temporarily. Though readers need not feel disappointed—
this new series of some very interesting essays too is

being written by Dr. S.B.Wangyel

elcome to this ten-part series on 'Their words - Our vocabulary'. We are, I would like to believe, a class by ourselves when it comes to adopting and adapting foreign worlds into our vocabulary. This short essay will consider same of the English words that have slipped into ours. The word 'hap-pen' per se makes no sense but once its root 'half pants' is brought to mind the adaptability becomes obvious. Similarly so many English words became Nepali with just the minutest of change: tile to 'tali', pension to 'pinsin' ar' pelsin', bioscope to 'baieskope', brush to 'burus', sentry to 'santry' etc. Even English names of places find our sculpting tongues transforming them to suit our speech. In Darjeeling the Shrubbery Grounds became 'Sarbari' Ground, in Kalimpong the Homes became 'Homus,' in Sikkim the White Hall was altered to 'Witeall' and in Kurseong Dow Hill was changed to Daoill'. To arrive at our own new words we sometimes make additions and at other times we subtract from the English. A good example of our expanding a word would be 'tarkari'. Here the word curry is expanded with the addition of 'tar' or gravy/sap giving us the hybrid 'tarkari' or curry with gravy. But we are at our best when subtracting and my favourite is 'alkatra' for tar. In the olden days when the road were being laid out in our hills the cold environment would freeze the tar so hard that oil had to be added to soften it. Thus developed the term 'oil an coal tar' and our forefathers not to happy with the tonquetwister simply reduced it to 'alkatra'. Similarly, the drivers had a difficult time saying 'shok-absorber, jerk-absorber' and so they abbreviated the whole thing to 'shokup jokup'. The simplest of abbreviation is to be found with cauliflower where our ancestors just removed the second moiety 'flower' and kept the first part 'cauli' or 'kauli'. The same ques for 'patloong' for pantaloons, 'paltan' for platoon etc. simple slip of the tonque can be traced in 'eskroop' for screw, 'bundil' for bundle, and 'kitli' for kettle. Dr. Indra Bahadur Rai's explanation as to why we chose not to call the tea gardens with more precise words like 'bari', 'bagan' or 'bagaicha' is another that I am very fond of. In the days of yore the Assisstant Managers would, pointing to the plantation, command the workers to hurry saying, "Come on, come on." Our folks thought that the place the fingers were pointing to was the "Kaman" and so the word stuck. It is an unwritten law that any English word commencing with an 's' has to be rendered with an 'es' in the Nepali and so we have eschool (school), espeed (speed), stand, estation, etc. Our favourite and the most useful vegetable, squash, of which we can eat every part: the fruit, the leaves, the tendrils, the stems and the shoots, took a little more refining that the simple addition of 'es'. After all it is our special vegetable and so from squash it became 'esquash' according to the established system and then received an additional revision to finish off as 'esquoosh! Esquoosh me for the day, more in the next issue.

Massage Walla of Kalimpong

Earlier published in Outpost Magazine,
Written by Bruce Kirkby

In 1904 David MacDonald accomp a n i e d Younghusband on his famous mission to Ti

bet, becoming one of the first westerners ever to reach the forbidden city of Lhasa. While Younghusband stantly became a household name, history has but forgotten MacDonald, the expedition interpreter. I would never have heard of him except for the fact that his colonial home, perched high on a ridge in the Himalayan foothills near the hill station of Kalimpong, is now an upscale guest house, and I had just checked in.

Overlooking the Kanchenjunga massif, and engulfed in a luxuriant garden, the vinecovered mansion was "once the biggest nest

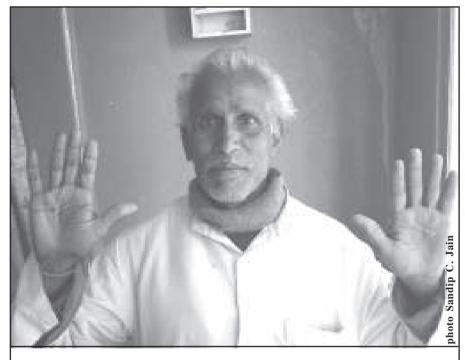
of spies this side of the Bosphorus," or so a bespeckled Swiss paper restoration expert had whispered secretively to me at the departures terminal of the Guwahati airport earlier in the week. The guest register is crammed with remembrances of an exotic and mysterious past: Heinrich Harrer, George Mallory, Sandy Irvine and Sir Edmund Hillary all stayed here.

And so it was, after days of jolting travel along narrow winding roads, through tea plantations that floated past our jeep windows, we arrived. I walked around the luxuriant home in silent awe. History seeped from every nook and cranny of the dark and musty rooms; vaulted oak ceilings soaring on teak pillars, hand-crafted walnut furniture and faded photographs.

"Hey Bruce! There's a guy out here you've got to meet!" Michele, my co-guide, was smiling from ear to ear and grasping the hand of a wild-looking Indian gentleman.

"Massage walla," she whispered, as he took her hand, intently pressed it to his dark forehead, and then to his heart. Long silver hair flowed unkempt in all directions, his slight frame draped in a white robe, a brilliant red tikka streaked across his forehead.

"Massage, massage?" he smiled, tilting his head to one side in



Shiri- The massagewala of Kalimpong

question, and pointing up and down my body. "Good massage. You? Yes," he proclaimed with a laugh, turning the question to an answer and herding me towards my room.

"You've got to give him a try," M i c h e l e shrugged her shoulders and winked. "So you can tell our guests what he's like."

"Time no problem,' the massage walla reassured me. "Half hour only," he smiled, taking my hand and dragging me into my room.

Somewhere, at a deeply instinctive level, tiny warn-

ing flags were exploding in my head. I followed the walla into my room and he bolted the door behind us. As he carefully set out a thin sheet on the hard floor, and laid a matted old towel down as a pillow, I shuffled about the room, not sure what to do next.

"Should I take this off?" I asked almost ridiculously, pointing to my shirt.

"Yes, yes. Off," he said absently with a sweep of his hand.

I figured I better take off my pants as well. But I balked at the underwear.

"These too?" I asked quietly, fearing the answer.

"Yes, yes," he looked at me as if I was crazy.

Well, what the heck. I dropped the briefs on my bed and turned to stand, completely nude, before the hunched old man. Well,

not quite completely nude. I still had a collection of ratty old necklaces and a wristwatch which the walla indicated should be removed as well.

The walla proudly held out a tattered, oil-stained book for my inspection, full of recommendations from fellow travellers. On the first page, largely obliterated by smeared ink, it read:

Shiri – Massage Man.

I specialize in following parts of human body:

Head, neck, sinus, shoulders, thighs, chest (full body) or half body.

I can heal and soothe twisted ankles, sinus, and "something-elseindecipherable."

Sincerely Shiri

Half shoving, half motioning, the massage walla indicated he wanted me lying face down, then stripped down to a sarong and sat on his haunches beside me. A look of supreme concentration clouded his face. Using one finger as a hammer, and another as a pad, the walla proceeded to tap every bony protrusion on my back, neck, and hips, watching my reactions and occasionally muttering with concern. Suddenly he dug his fingers directly into a knot in my neck I hadn't even known was there.

"One." He proclaimed. Tracing his fingers slowly down my back, he stopped at another. "Two!" And finally, "Three! Sore no?" he smiled. I nodded, still breathless from the pain.

Reaching into a thin plastic bag he pulled out an old shampoo bottle filled with thick, yellow-green oil, its stale scent frighteningly similar to a mechanic's garage. Now the walla got down to slapping, smacking and occasionally rubbing. He used his forearm to dig at the knots. Finished with my back, he moved upwards, kneeling by my head and grasping it tightly between his knees and cramming his forearm against my skull.

He then poured a healthy glob of oil into his hands and rubbed it aggressively through my hair. My pony tail became a whip that the walla used across my shoulders and neck. I loved it. I had to bite the towel to stop from laughing aloud. Shiri muttered and chanted, then moved on to my hands, and in one swift motion, cracked every knuckle on both hands at once.



I specialize in the following body parts-Head, neck, sinus, shoulders, thighs, chest (full body) of half body

The massage went on and on. Just when I thought it was finished, the walla would nimbly jump to a new position and begin again. I almost forgot I was lying nude on the floor of a turn-of-the-century house, in northern India, with a tiny dark man who spoke almost no English rubbing oil all over my body.

"Name Shiri. Group coming, you and Madame telling, Shiri, massage walla, very good massage."

He wanted a recommendation to the group of well-heeled travellers we'd be bringing next week. No problem. I would send the troops in.

The massage walla went back to his muttering and tapping. As the walla went to his plastic bag for more

oil he gave a motion like flipping a burger. 'Front side,' he smiled. We were too far down the road to stop now. Screw inhibitions, I told myself, flipped over and laid back.

The walla returned with a new oil in an old mango pickle jar. Squatting beside me, he carefully poured drop after tiny drop into my belly button. Then he moved up and liberally splashed oil across my chest. Then he threw a large splash right across my crotch, finished the bottle off on my legs, and started rubbing circles around my stomach. The tickling was almost too much to take, but it was tempered by a growing fear of what was to come next.

Sure enough the walla worked his way down, smacking the hip bones, and then suddenly reaching between my legs, grabbing everything in a handful, and pulling it over to one side. I froze like a board. As the walla worked the inside muscles of the other leg, I gritted my teeth. With a deft flip he moved all the goods to the opposite side and dug in to the other thigh. I relaxed, and began to feel OK with the whole procedure. It even felt good.

But my relief was short lived. Once done with the inner thighs, Shiri focused on the package, waving his open hand rapidly back and forth, from hip bone to hip bone, an action that affected a rapid slap-slap-slap of the privatest part of the body from side to side. I wavered between abject terror and uncontrollable laughter, simultaneously closer to both than I had ever before thought possible. To finish off Shiri used the heel of his palm to mash everything in the general area. I was left stunned, and wondering if this was normal protocol for Indian massage. The good walla had been trained by his father, and he by his father before him. It was a family skill.

Finally, after smacking my chest, poking my armpits, and crossarming my neck, I thought the worst was over. The walla went to his bag and pulled out six bottles of oil. They ranged in size from an olive oil container to a spice jar. All looked to be about 50 years old, with rusty lids.

"One... three... four... five... seven!" he counted out, sure to hold up each one so I could see it, coming to crouch above my head holding the sixth and smallest bottle. The walla took several drops and worked the fragrantly scented oil into his hands. I relaxed. Again, a mistake.

Before I knew it the walla grabbed my head and began vigorously massaging the inside of my nose. Then he almost popped my eyes out with a sharp hard push. Finally he was into my ears, finishing off by rubbing the wax he had excavated there across my nose and cheeks.

More perfumed oil appeared, and I watched dumbfounded as he carefully and elicately began rubbing it in circles on my nipples. And of course, the crotch could do with a little perfume as well.

And finally, sitting up he performed a series of raps to my noggin that sounded like machine gun fire going off in the room. "Finished!" he said with a proud smile. "Good?"

Good, I said, feeling like a rubber man on the hottest day of summer.

"Massage man shower?" he asked.

I was about to slip my underwear on, hoping to bring the situation back to some level of normality, but realized from head to toe I was a greasy mess.

"Come, come," the walla yelled from the bathroom. He pointed to the shower and impatiently motioned for me to turn it on and then for me to get myself wet. I did, and was about to grab a bar of soap and wash up, but the walla put a stop to that.

"Yah, yah," he motioned for me to put my arms up in the air. Now this was too much. Only a week earlier I had boarded my flight to Dehli a perfectly sane young man. Now I was standing in a hotel shower, totally nude, with an old Indian man vigorously rubbing my back with soap.

The shower was no simple procedure either. The hair had to be washed. Then rinsed. Then checked to make sure it was rinsed. Then I had to rinse my body again. Then the walla towelled me off. All business. No funny stuff at all. I swear. And to finish it all off, Shiri wanted me to sign his book of recommendations.

"Next week, you and Madam, group bringing? You telling, Shiri, massage, Himalayan Hotel, good."

Oh, not to worry! In four days time I was bringing 10 very well-heeled North American travellers, and you can bet I would be recommending Shiri, without even so much as a warning. I'd send them in blind, and wait with eager anticipation to see them at dinner. And I am telling you too. If you are in Kalimpong, you must see Shiri. Plus, you're going to be sore after a long ride on bumpy roads, and your head will ache from the diesel fumes. Give it a try. It is only four bucks. Besides, everyone needs the plums tickled from time to time!



A reflection on K A L I M P O N G

s a relatively naïve and sheltered female, I arrived in India seeking what some may view as the typical gap year cliché. A profound experience, cultural climax, tempting an alter ego. However much scrutinize my intentions or desires an initial interest in the contrasting society spurred me to come to India, taste a life outside from the monotonous routine that was becoming my existence in England. And what more of a

contrast could one imagine, with its hectic abundance of religions, people, spice and colour, India certainly is an attractive infusion.

So, the question poised in my anticipating mind was how? The pressing ideal was to totally immerse myself in a new environment thus the motion towards teaching. Working and living, being integrated and accepted rather than continually moving and possibly forgetting. (the constant humm of Harre Krishna lodges is not all that appealing when one wants to intersperse on a more local and personal level.

March 1^{\pm} , 2005 Kalimpong and Good Start Montessori became what I will so fondly refer to as my home for nearly four months. Very rarely can one place exude such warmth and



leave such an indented impression on someone perception. I suppose I was anxiously anticipation my security and happiness in this strange new environment. but. Kalimpong the people, Mr. & Mrs. Lal, and the children at Good Start School provided such a welcoming ambience that I was allowed to feel just as I was at. 'home'. This requisite feeling I am most grateful to you all and hope can continue throughout the rest of my travel across India.

As requested I am conscious to discuss Kalimpong and the various

ideas if has provoked within me. I think one aspect no one can fail to recognize is the natural effervescence, nestled in the of the Himalaya's the mountainous beauty definitely provides a source of strength and continuity that I feel is quite prevalent amongst the attitudes of people here. I must say that waking up in the morning to a panoramic view of the hills, observing the butterflies dancing on the orchids of my veranda and taking a deep lung of clean mountain air certainly stimulates a feel good factor that I believe is rather indicative of ones mentality. It is important not to take for granted the paradisiacal element of your surroundings, to be aware of it's positive effects and to appreciate when one is lucky enough to live amongst it. As far as my outlook has been touched, culturally Kalimpong offers a highly eclectic mix of people; Nepalis, Marwaris, Tibetans, Biharis, the combination of castes is numerous. And with such a multicultural society comes contrasting religious, traditions, foods, dress, practice....such an enchanting and plentiful environment to have lived in. One short walk and so much can be observed, a Muslim Mosque and a Buddhist Monastery sitting side by side what a blissful paradox! A woman in a sari or a duppatta, a man in a lungi or а suit. grandmother serenely spinning her prayer wheel or a Sadhu siting beside the road with his Sanskrit scripts. And so as the chants from a puja fills the air and

the echo from a Namaz calls five times a day I beg in to realize just how much one can learn through sight and sound.

What is even more interesting is when you stop to consider how such an enriching society must reflect on the intellect of those who live within it. I am amazed at the level of acceptance, how in such diversity unity seems to prevail. There is always some sort of community- binding event in practice, whether it be a Rotary Club contribution a School organization. And with such spirit of togetherness one notices the respect from one person to the other, the idea of prospering communally is definitely prevent. And so as I prepare to depart from Kalimpong, I can begin to recall certain thoughts and memories, people I have met, things that have been said and done.

One person said to me Holly don't be so liberal with your compliments I think this quite comprises much of the Indian regard concerning prosperity. Be more accepting of criticism one can only further themselves if held back momentarily.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

Publisher:
Address:
Editor:
Address:

Phone No:

Himalayan Sales.
Main Road, Kalimpong.
Mr. Sandip C. Jain
Himalayan Stores, Kalimpong.
(03552) 255448, 9832016738
Darpan Publications Pvt. Ltd;
Siliquri. Phone:0353-

Printed at:

My dad says being a preacher teaching grown ups under a banyan tree is much more profitable than teaching children in schools.

Computer & layout
Miss Reema Biswakarma
Marketing & Advertisement
Miss Upashna Tamang
Local Corrospondent
Mr. Anup Moktan

GORKHA CHANNEL

Kalimpongs premier local TV channel

*videography*video editing*news
programme*visual advertisements*
album jackets*cultural troupe for
parties or social occasions

<u>contact</u> 9832005013, 9434143274

Expression!!!

The Pilot

Sonam B Wanqyal

(Dedicated to Leader Sonam Wangdi (IAF) Of Ihamo Khangsar, 10^{th} Mile, Kalimpong who dies when his helicopter blew up in mid-air)

The Pilot's body was found.

The funeral quieter than the life he led.

The mourners more that the days he spent.

"His kindness was like
A warm embracing wind
On a chilly night."
Someone said.

"He was a father, son and a friend.

Concern and care splashed

Across his forty short years."

A relative wrote.

"He was like the finest silk.
Smooth, soft, sophisticated:
Joy to all who came in contact."
A friend eulogized.

"He was an angle's envy.

Gentle, compassionate and pure:

A hope in the swamp of distress."

The beggar voiced.

"In the charred remains of his pocket
A letter, a note, an angst
in trim script we found.
The policeman said.

Dear God, I'll forgive You
For all the big jokes
You played on me...
If you forgive me
For the small jokes
I played on you."
The pilot had written.

Winner of the quiz published in the Vol 2, Issue
13 of Himalayan Times is
Bikash Chhetri
Congrats Bikash

please collect your prize from our office. The correct answers for the quiz published in the

last issue are

- 1. Allen Ginsberg(of 'Howl and other poems' fame
- 2. Himalayan Mountaineering Institute
- 3. Kazi Lendup Dorjee
- 4. The halting place at the Po Tree (Sal or a kind of Cypress)
- 5. Rup Narayan Sinha

In this issue Suraj Mani Pradhan

asks us-

- 1. How do we better know Kedarnath Pande (born 9th April, 1893) as?
- 2. When was Darjeeling Govt. Collage established?
- 3. This author was born in Lingia tea estate,
 Darjeeling in 1937. the author's most famous
 book (1965) finds a place in the syllabus of
 Maryland University, USA. Name the author
 and the book.
- 4. Lal Bahadur Sewa was born on 15th July 1929 in a poor family in Mirik town. What distinction does he hold amongst the Nepalese?
- 5. Which place in Sikkim has the distinction of having the country's first bio-diversity park?

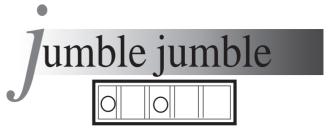
Answer the above question correctly and send in your entries to us by the 5th April 2006 to win a sleek

Parker Vector pen

courtesy

Ad Venture Creations Maa Super Market Kalimpong





Hint:Pradhan, who is the Principal of an upcoming ICSE school



Hint:Mukhia, who is a famous footballer of the past from Pedong



Hint:Person of foreign origin who is a famous Lepcha scholar who now resides in England



Hint: The most famouse name in Nepali literature who was from Kalimpong.



Hint: The second MLA to represent Kalimpong in the West Bengal Legaslative Assembly.



Hint: Exiled Afghan Princeses who has made Kalimpong her `home.

Complete the above Jumble and send in your entry with the coupon given below by the 5th April 2006 to win a free lunch for two at **Soods Garden Retreat, Kalimpong.** The correct answers for the jumble published in the last issue are

DELTA, NETHUT, ODYSSES, NETPOINT, CYBERINFOTECH & CONTACT POINT

The winner will be decided by a draw of lots. The names of all those who sent in correct answers for the jumble in the last issue are Ramkumar Chhetri, Doma Sherpa, Ramesh Khati, Sashi Dural, Shalani Agarwal, Dipesh Sunam, Tshering Namgyel Bhutia, Yusuf, M.K.Ghatraj, Basant Kumar Shivakoty, Ongden Lepcha, Sweta Kumai, Passang Sherpa, Pinky Basnet, Sangeeta Shrestha, Angel Pradhan and the winner is—

Miss SURABHI GURUNG

Please submit your entry in a plain sheet of paper alongwith this coupon. Please do not tear this page to submit your entry.





Chef's Corner

By Chef Meena Pradhan

Sajana Ko Phul

INGREDIENTS

Boiled Sajana Ko Phul - 250 grm
Pure Ghee - 3 tablespoon.

1 Tomato chopped

1 onion chopped
Salt to taste

A dash of Turmeric

METHOD

Heat ghee in kadai, add a dash of turmeric, add chopped onion, add Tomato chopped. Cook for some time, till the tomato gets soft. Add the boiled and strained Sajana Ko Phul. Add salt and cook for some till the water gets absorbed & serve hot with rice or roti.

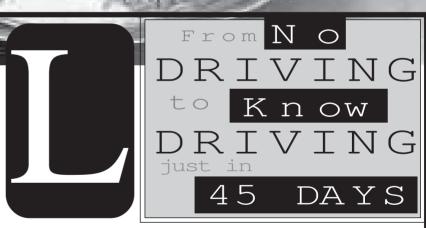
Duko Ko Aachar

INGREDIENTS

Duku Par boiled -250grm
Til/ Badam roasted and pounded 50 gm
3 tablespoons of mustard oil to temper
1 tablespoon Fenugreek seeds
5 slit green chillies
1 lemon juice
salt to taste.

METHOD

String, cut duku into desined length
Par boil it, keep it aside. Mix til &
Badam powder, lemon juice & salt.
Heat oil till very hot,
temper with Fenugreek seed/
Green Chillies, mix well.
Serve with rice or roti.



"Learn Motor Vehicle Driving With Us"

MANI AUTO INSTITUTE

(Govt. Of West Bengal Authorised)
Lall Galli, In front of Hotel Classic
D.S.Gurung Road,
Kalimpong
Phone (94341- 66482)



Himalayan Times takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the details furnished by persons whose names appear in this column. Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries before getting in touch with those whose names appear in this column.

As per your request, a friends column is being started in Himalayan Times from this issue onwards. Those interested to have their names published in this column may send in their name, address, age, hobbies and contact number in the form given below.

Tina Gurung.(F) Mangal Dara Phone - 9832312021.	Sonam Lhamu (F) Primtam Road Phone- 9932897698.	Binita Sharma (F) Upper Cart Road Phone- 993267991
Monica Rai (F) Upper Cart Road Phone- 9932679941.	Sumita Subedi (F) Primtam Road Phone- 9932758169.	Rosan Sharma(M) Jawhar Busty 2 Chowrasta Darjeeling

Fly on India's

Fastest Growing Airlines

at the best rates

Call us for

lowest fares available on AIR DECCAN various sectors Simplifly

For Bookings or queries call 9832067526/9832067931

AIR DECCAN AGENTS: Dynamic Solutions, Jopa Complex, Main Road, Kalimpong * Air Deccan Flies to 37 destinations in India and operates about 140 flights daily



Himalayan Automations Total IT Solutions













We deal in a complete range of Desktop & Notebook Computers, Printers, Peripherals, Fax, Photo Copiers, Telephone Handsets, Ink Cartridges & Toners and all types of computer stationery.

> Main Road, Kalimpong – 734301 Mobile: 98320 67526 / 67931

Name	
Age ———	
Address —	
Hobbies —	
Contact number—	



nostalgia



Photograph courtesy Kalimpong Stores(Kodak) and available for sale







Lady Mountbatten with children at the Dr. Grahams Homes during her visit to Kalimpong in 1947

ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

Ms. Monila De

Is considered as one of the best English writers in the Darjeeling Hills. Her indepth knowledge about the region makes her a gold mine of Information

Holly Meadous

Is a resident of Berkshire, England who was in Kalimpong on a voluntary teaching assignment in the Good Start School.

Dr. Sonam B. Wangyel

Is a Jaigoan based doctor who is acknowledged as an authority on the history of this region.

Mr. Anup Moktan

Is a student of Kalimpong College who is also a correspondent with Himalayan Times.

Mr. Gautam Lama

Is a teacher in Benjamin's Garden School and is a cartoonist with a Siliguri based paper.

Chef Meena Pradhan

Is a chef who has worked with The Park Hotel In Calcutta for several years . Presently runs the Fresh Bite restaurant in Kalimpong

GSIHM

FOR ALL YOUR CELL PHONE REQUIREMENTS VISIT

CELLULAR ZONE OPPOSITE BATA, MAIN ROAD, KALIMPONG

ALL TYPES OF MOBILES HAND SET (NOKIA,SONY,ERRICSSION,MOTOROLA,SAMSUNG) AVAILABLEATTHEMOSTATTRACTIVERATES

AVAILABLE: BSNL POST-PAID & PRE-PAID CONNECTIONS, RECHARGE VOUCHERS FOR RELIANCE, AIRTEL AND HUTCH AS WELL AS I.T.CARDS & INTERNET CARDS OF BSNL

